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Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04138 231129Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------033545 231133Z /11
O 231043Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8829
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY AMMAN

S E C R E T BEIRUT 4138

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MARR, UN, SY, LE
SUBJECT: REMARKS OF GHASSAN TUENI, LEBANESE AMBASSADOR
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

1. ON JULY 21 AMBASSADOR PARKER, USDEPUTY PERMANENT REP
LEONARD, AND VISITING DESK OFFICER NAT HOWELL LUNCHED WITH
GHASSAN TUENI AT DCM LANE'S HOME.

2. TUENI HAD JUST COME FROM THE DEFENSE MINISTRY, AND HE SAID
PLANNING WAS IN THE FINAL STAGES FOR DEPLOYMENT OF SOME
LEBANESE ARMED FORCES (LAF) UNITS TO SOUTH LEBANON. TUENI
BELIEVED THE ORIGINAL DEPLOYMENT WOULD BE "SOMEWHAT MORE" THAN
200 TO 300 MEN, WHO WOULD PROCEED VIA THE BEQAA AND BE
STATIONED IN THE MARJAYUN REGION, WITHIN RANGE OF SYRIAN
ARTILLERY SUPPORT.

3. TUENI SAID HE REALIZED THAT IF THE GOL DID NOT SEND ARMY
UNITS SOUTH, THE SECURITY COUNCIL MIGHT NOT RENEW UNIFIL'S
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MANDATE WHEN IT EXPIRED IN SEPTEMBER. HE RECOUNTED
THAT UNIFIL'S DEPUTY COMMANDER, JEAN CUQ, HAD REMARKED
RECENTLY THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WOULD BE VERY
EMBARRASSED IF NO LAF UNITS WERE SENT SOUTH, AND THAT
EVEN TEN SOLDIERS WOULD BE BETTER THAN NONE.

4. TUENI WAS CONVINCED THAT THIS TIME LEBANON WAS

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REALLY READY TO SEND UNITS SOUTH. FOREIGN MINISTER FOUAD BOUTROS, WHO HAD HAD DOUBTS BEFIRE, NOW FULLY SUPPORTED DEPLOYMENT SOUTH. PRIME MINISTER AL HOSS, HOWEVER, SEEMED LESS CERTAIN THAN BEFORE ABOUT THE WISDOM OF SENDING THE ARMY SOUTH. (IN JULY 23 CONVERSATION WITH AMB LEONARD AND, HOWEVER, AL HOSS DID NOT EXPRESS OPPOSITION TO LIMITED INITIAL LAF DEPLOYMENT TO SOUTH AND INDICATED THAT SOME OF THE ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS, E.G. HADDAD, HAD BEEN WORKED OUT WITH HIS CONCURRENCE. SEPTEL FOLLOWS.)

5. TUENI THOUGHT THE UNITS SHOULD DEPLOY BEFORE FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM VISITED BEIRUT. OTHERWISE, THE GOL WOULD SEEM TO BE REACTING TO SYRIAN PRESSURE. (LEONARD AND HOWELL STRESSED THAT THE GOL SHOULD SEND UNITS SOUTH AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.) TUENI SAID PRESIDENT SARKIS HAD NAMED HIM COORDINATOR OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF LEBANESE UNITS SOUTH. TUENI VOWED NOT TO LEAVE LEBANON UNTIL UNITS WERE DEPLOYED.

6. IN ADDITION, TUENI THOUGHT THE GOL WOULD DEAL WITH SA'AD HADDAD AND SAMI SHIDIAC WITHIN A MATTER OD DAYS, BUT TUENI DID NOT KNOW HOW. TUENI SAID THE GOL COULD NEVER FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE RIGHT OF THE ISRAELIS TO KEEP THE "GOOD FENCE" OPEN. THE GOL POSITION CONTINUED TO BE THAT THE 1949 ARMISTICE AGREEMENT GOVERNED THE BORDER, AND THAT IT MUST BE CLOSED. THE

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GOL COULD, HOWEVER, SAY THAT UNIFIL WAS NOW RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BORDER AREA AND ANY ARRANGEMENTS MADE THERE. (LEONARD POINTED OUT THAT IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO SECURE COOPERATION FROM THE ISRAELIS WITH REGARD TO THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS IN SOUTH LEBANON, IF THE GOL INSISTED ON CLOSING THE "GOOD FENCE.")
PARKER

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